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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this document is to prepare those who work with foreign students for the variety of emergency situations in which a consciousness of cross-cultural differences can be significant. It is primarily intended to provide educational and resource material to those who advise, counsel, and assist foreign students and scholars and their families in the United States. The premise of the manual is that an emergency situation in any setting elicits a series of emotional, psychological, and physiological responses from those in a position to provide assistance, but that in a cross-cultural setting, an additional element of anxiety is introduced due to the unknown aspects of the foreign culture involved. Whether the situation involves a foreign student in an American university, or an American abroad, counselors need to understand and respect the differences inherent in each culture in order to provide rapid, effective, and sensitive treatment of emergency situations. Hence this publication discusses emergency or crisis situations in order to help others prepare in advance to handle them. It addresses issues such as health problems, personal crises in the United States and in the home country, legal and financial crises, suicide, murder, sex-related crises, missing persons, and terrorist activities. Case studies, a directory of resources, and related resource readings are included. (BHK)

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN A CROSS-CULTURAL SETTING

Patricia A. Burak

National Association for Foreign Student Affairs

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN A CROSS-CULTURAL SETTING

By
Patricia A. Burak

National Association for Foreign Student Affairs
1987

The National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA) is a nonprofit membership association that provides training, information, and other educational services to professionals in the field of international educational exchange.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1
- Statement of Purpose
- Preparation for Problem Solving
- Attitude of the Intervening Person
- Cross-Cultural Foundations for Crisis Management

CHAPTER 1: HEALTH PROBLEMS 6
- Insurance
- Mental Health
- Mental/Emotional Breakdowns
- Physically Debilitating Illnesses
- Accidents
- Death of a Student
- AIDS

CHAPTER 2: PERSONAL CRISES IN THE UNITED STATES 14
- Academic Failure
- Marital Infidelity/Divorce
- Abuse
- Death of a Spouse or Child

CHAPTER 3: PERSONAL CRISES ORIGINATING IN THE HOME COUNTRY ... 18
- Illness of a Family Member
- Death of a Family Member
- Parental Discord/Divorce
- Political Strife at Home

CHAPTER 4: LEGAL CRISES 22
- Immigration Legal Problems
- Civil Proceedings
- Criminal Proceedings/Arrest

CHAPTER 5: FINANCIAL CRISES 26
- Political Situations in the Home Country
- Sponsored Students
- Loss of a Sponsor
- Family Situations
- Death of a Parent
- Life-Style
- Sources of Financial Crisis Relief

CHAPTER 6: SUICIDE 32

CHAPTER 7: MURDER 34

CHAPTER 8: SEX-RELATED CRISES 37
- Rape
- Unwanted Pregnancy
- Gay/Lesbian Affiliations

CHAPTER 9: A MISSING PERSON 43

CHAPTER 10: TERRORIST ACTIVITIES..... 45

CHAPTER 11: CASE STUDIES 47

CHAPTER 12: DIRECTORY OF RESOURCES..... 52

RELATED RESOURCE READINGS 56

INDEX 57

About the Author..... 58

Introduction

Statement of Purpose

An emergency situation in any setting elicits a series of emotional, psychological, and physiological responses from those in a position to provide assistance. In a cross-cultural setting an additional element of anxiety is introduced due to the unknown aspects of the foreign culture involved. Whether the situation involves a foreign student in an American university, or an American abroad, understanding of and respect for the differences inherent in each culture are needed for rapid, effective, and sensitive treatment of emergency situations.

The purpose of this publication is to prepare those who work with foreign students for the variety of emergency situations in which a consciousness of cross-cultural differences can be a significant factor. It is primarily intended to provide educational and resource material to those who advise, counsel, and assist foreign students and scholars and their families in the United States.

Although the foreign student adviser is generally regarded as the primary source of assistance to foreign students, it is widely recognized that many other individuals play a major role in assisting the foreign visitor through emergencies, big and small, during his or her sojourn in America. Therefore, this publication is not written strictly for the foreign student advising professional, but for all who could benefit from its theme. Within the university or college environment, deans of students, chaplains, health service personnel, residential life counselors, advisers and hall directors, academic deans, faculty, and staff are all occasionally drawn into a crisis situation. Financial aid officers often deal with reactions from students which border on nervous breakdowns. Within the community, volunteer host family program organizations face such potential situations as a result of the intimate relationships which can develop between a foreign visitor and his host. Churches often deal with problems which run the gamut from minor upsets to life and death situations. The more prepared these possible resource persons are, the better able they will be to handle the emergency in a cross-cultural setting.

It is, then, the intention of this publication to explore emergency or crisis situations and to help others prepare in advance to handle them. No one handbook can answer all questions. It is not possible to take into consideration all possible variations of any crisis, but a guide to follow should help any caring, competent person to seek help in helping others. It is not only desirable to be prepared in advance, but necessary.

Preparation for Problem Solving

"Be prepared!" The old Boy Scout motto is well applied to the topic of crisis management. Often we hear it from others, or we ourselves plead lack of time for background reading or attendance at presentations on the subject pertinent to our field of work. The question must be asked, however: How much time does one have in the midst of an emergency? Isn't it far better to be prepared in advance and equipped to deal with the range of factors than to be seeking answers in the heat of the moment? A practice now followed by many universities for new faculty is to give them a reduced teaching load their first year, so as to allow creative time for research and writing. This practice would be suitable for the foreign student adviser as well. The time spent researching and developing an understanding of the many cultural differences which are so very important to the profession would be extremely valuable in the long run. Long hours of discussion with students help educate and inform one, as well as creating an image of oneself as an interested and involved adviser. It is well to attend forums and seminars offered on campus and in the community which could be relevant to your responsibilities. The investment of time selectively chosen yields far greater dividends when the emergency strikes.

Be prepared in your office setting. Know what resources are available to you and when and how to activate them. Know the locations and phone numbers of professional staff, both within the university and within the community. Create, within your own department, a support system for your efforts by arranging for the screening or holding of phone calls; arranging for a staff member to stay late with you when necessary; and being prepared to make adjustments in your schedule to accommodate unusual situations. Your priorities must be very clear to your superiors, so if your staff sees you involved in a crisis situation and cancels your imminent presentation to the senior management meeting, it can be accepted and dealt with in a professional manner at a later time. Keep up to date; know the "news," on campus as well as internationally. Know what is on the minds of students.

Occasionally a crisis can be averted or lessened by "cutting it off at the pass." Whisking away three Christian Lebanese students to an off-campus hideaway for a few days as a result of inside information about Christian-Muslim friction on campus averted injury and potential tragedy on one campus. Undercover police protection for protesting Iranian students when the Shah was in the United States after the revolution saved many campuses from explosive, life-threatening scenes. It is the responsibility of the foreign student adviser or those charged with foreign student affairs to keep the proverbial ear to the ground and avoid tinderbox situations wherever and whenever possible. Interventionist? Some might view such actions in this light. However, yet another piece of proverbial advice: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Attitude of the Intervening Person

How does one prepare for dealing with crisis situations, especially in a cross-cultural setting? The attitude one assumes is of utmost significance. One cannot be easily upset or disturbed by even the most extreme of situations. Empathy and respect for the emotions involved are, of course, integral to the helping relationship. However, your worry and fear should not be conveyed to the person in crisis. The intervening person should provide a sense of stability and strength. You should be able to alleviate some tension and anxiety in the student, scholar, or family member. Listen. Listen to both what is said and what isn't said. Quite often, it's what is not spoken that provides the clue to the solution. Establish an equilibrium in your own nature regarding different value systems. It is difficult to advise people when the apparent solutions to their problems go against your basic value structure. However, it is imperative that you keep <u>their</u> value system foremost in your mind. One school of thought suggests that you suspend your own value system when counseling across cultures. This is effective if it can work for you. Above all, however, do not offer alternatives which defile <u>their</u> value system.

Personally, one must be prepared to deal with emergency situations on a moment's notice. As with the birth of babies, emergencies never seem to come at "convenient" times: the night before Thanksgiving when you expect 24 for dinner; the morning of your daughter's first school play; the hour before your presentation to the board of trustees! The examples are endless. The point to be made is that you must expect the unexpected at any of these times. It cannot be expected of any one person to be available 100 percent of the time. There will be occasions when you simply <u>cannot</u> help. Don't, then, let guilt consume you. Have a back-up system. No one person is <u>indispensable</u>, as much as we believe ourselves to be important!

In a university setting, there are always other trained, "on-call" staff members available for the student population as a whole. If your response is: "Well, they can't handle <u>foreign</u> students," then your responsibility is to train them in cross-cultural sensitivity. Work cooperatively, as a team. Introduce your staff to the other resources on campus so that they, too, are able to make referrals when you simply are not available. Within the community, every host or program organization has a board which directs its activities. Establish an emergency network among board members so that if a host family becomes aware of a situation and needs assistance, someone is available to help.

Religious organizations generally have well-established counseling and guidance networks. The one piece of advice offered here is that it is not always important to remain within the specific religious affiliation to receive help in an emergency situation. A Jewish rabbi can help a Protestant student and a Catholic priest could advise a Muslim under needful circumstances. Helping, coping, counseling skills are not religiously oriented, and warmth, love, and

sensitivity are common to all members of the clergy. Keep this in mind when seeking assistance.

Develop your own network system as well. Talk with experienced counselors and advisers in many fields (i.e., Student Affairs, Health Services, community groups, religious groups) to cull from their experiences and wisdom. Ask them, "How would you handle such-and-such a situation?" Many situations repeat themselves, unfortunately, over and over again. We can learn from others and better equip ourselves for the future. There is no need to constantly recreate the wheel.

Talk with foreign nationals about specific scenarios, both in advance and after the fact. Ask questions: "How should the body of a Muslim car accident victim be handled when the county coroner demands an autopsy and religious custom prohibits?" "How does one act at a Chinese funeral service? What is the proper way to express condolences?" "How is mental illness regarded in your country? What might persuade a national from your country to seek professional help?" "What is the attitude toward rape victims in your country? How should I expect a woman to receive my help and react to the judicial process against her attacker?" Again, the list is endless. The idea is to gain knowledge in advance, whenever possible. Be prepared.

Cross-Cultural Foundations for Crisis Management

In Western culture, a crisis might be defined as a situation in which control has been lost by an individual, rendering him unable to effectively cope with his environment. With such a broad definition, many scenes can be classified "crises": emotional breakdown, medical emergency or serious illness, severe psychological distress, financial disaster, rape, assault, theft, and much more. Western tradition dictates seeking help in such situations, and hence the term often used is "crisis management." In fact, not all crises can be "managed," but we can, and must, act to alleviate some of the distress and redirect the individual in a positive direction of self-control. This is Western-based thinking. In some other cultures, crises, especially of the type mentioned above, are dealt with quietly and in-family. Outside "professional" help is seldom, if ever, sought. The shame and disgrace associated with the crisis outweigh the possible redemptive value of outside help.

How, then, to bridge this "cross-cultural" gap as a helping professional or concerned individual within Western culture? It is only possible to operate in a manner familiar to you, the helper, when under duress. Assume the most positive attitude toward your position as possible; you are a concerned, caring, informed, capable "significant other" in the life of this foreign visitor. His or her own family structure is unavailable. Do not disparage any attitude toward you but rise above it. Assume that you will be helpful, but soft-pedal your "interventionist," or "outsider" role. It will grate less if you don't bluntly state, "You must seek professional help

because we do it this way here." Subconsciously students do, in fact, realize this, but it is a hard value to change, especially while under less than optimal circumstances!

You, as an individual, will be more readily accepted than you, as the dean of students, or you, as the director of campus counseling services. Optimize your own personal traits, even including your professional training and experience. Remember, however, that more than likely a foreign student, scholar, or family member has sought you out as an individual and not as your professional title labels you. Act accordingly.

Chapter 1

Health Problems

Insurance

Health care in the United States has received a great deal of attention over the past few years, and some of that attention is well-focused upon the needs of foreigners. The United States is far from supporting a government-based, tax-supported system of national health care. Yet, resources exist for those impoverished American citizens or permanent residents who cannot afford to pay for their health care and have no insurance coverage. Such a system DOES NOT EXIST for the foreign national on a nonimmigrant visa in the United States. Foreign students and their families generally find themselves in difficult, expensive, no-win situations when it comes to health care. It is the role of the foreign student adviser or other service provider to make available comprehensive, affordable health insurance to the foreign student from the date of arrival. Clauses which exclude pre-existing conditions should be thoroughly explained to the student. Maternity coverage, an expensive "add-on" to many policies, must be discussed, in spite of the privacy this issue requires. Information as to available health care providers on campus and in the community is needed. A well-child clinic, women's clinic, dental clinic, and the use of the emergency room at a nearby hospital should all be discussed. Medical emergencies, especially those involving children, are generally dealt with directly by the student and the health care provider. Your prior information and guidance may avert a more serious illness or result of an injury.

Insurance coverage should also cover emotional/psychological problems, including both hospitalization and outpatient treatment by a psychiatrist or psychologist. Mental breakdowns are among the most difficult problems which we face in the foreign student advising profession. The loss of mental or emotional stability is frightening, both for the student and for the care provider. Depending upon how early the instability is detected, several alternatives do exist.

Mental Health

Early detection: When the behavior of a foreign student or scholar is noted to be peculiar, notwithstanding cultural differences, the foreign student adviser should be notified immediately. Consultations with the student should be supplemented by private discussions with health care professionals, a roommate(s), fellow countryman(woman), teacher, residence hall adviser, if applicable, and close friend, if existent. Reference notes in a student's file should yield the name and phone number of a friend or relative in the United States to whom a call could be made.

In assessing the mental health of a student, particular attention should be paid to the degree and duration of symptoms. Many problems can be handled on an outpatient basis if intervention is begun early. Should problems not ameliorate or should they become more serious, alternatives need to be explored. Consultation with a mental health expert might assist you in assessing the situation. In these serious situations, one alternative which should be considered is to have the student return to his or her home country. It is far better to lose one semester of study, or one year, than to really suffer the full effects of a nervous breakdown in a foreign country. The return to the home environment, resuming normal eating habits of foods to which one's body is accustomed, resuming speech in one's native language, and recognition of one's place in one's own culture is sometimes the most effective medicine. Although this sounds facile on paper, it is no mean feat to convince an ailing (albeit mentally or emotionally disturbed) student to drop out of school and return home at that moment. It requires a great deal of persuasive argumentation. Arguments which might counter their inevitable sense of shame and failure include: "You would not be reluctant to rest after a major operation or a broken leg; this requires the same kind of recuperation"; "Your parents would rather have you come home now and rebuild your energies than for you to have to stay in bed or go to a hospital here"; "Your body has been trying to tell you that it needs a break, a rest; listen to it before it gets even worse." Another convincing argument is your promise that you will try your best to have him/her return to the university when he/she is "well."

Advanced instability: When a student is already unable to cope with the mechanics of life, it is fruitless to use persuasive tactics to effect a return home. Help is needed. Help is often available in the form of a friend or relative in the United States or Canada who will come and take the ill person home. It cannot be overstressed that one should always have the name and phone number of an emergency contact available. Update it from year to year.

In the case where there is no one available for assistance, contact the embassy or consulate. Sometimes the staff will offer assistance or ideas. Check with fellow countrymen and teachers. As a last resort, return the responsibility to the parent. This is not reliable, as often it is impossible for them to come and assist. However, they may have valuable advice for you. A contact with them as a last measure, then, is recommended. In such a situation, be certain to inform the student's sponsor and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service of action taken.

Mental/Emotional Breakdowns

A nervous breakdown can happen anytime, anyplace. The stress of academics and demands of adjustment to a new culture render the foreign student vulnerable to an array of emotional and psychological problems. On campus, the foreign student adviser is generally the first one to be called. Your immediate response is crucial. A

person with whom the foreign student identifies is integral to regaining control over the situation. You might be called upon to assist in such an emergency. Here are some guidelines to follow:

1) Know your student(s) in advance. Be able to refer to his or her residence, home, parents, academic field of study; any "home base" topic might be the lasso you will need to "rope him in" to you.
2) Be calm and authoritative. Don't raise your voice.
3) Stay close to him or her. Be with them. Be reassuring. They are probably afraid too.
4) Listen. What will be said probably won't make a great deal of sense, but listen to it all. Ask questions just to keep up the connection between the two of you.
5) Have security officers/medical authorities on hand in the immediate vicinity.
6) University officials should be involved. Include mental health officials.
7) Know, in advance, how to get a mentally ill patient signed into a hospital or other institution. Effectuate those measures when the timing is right.
8) Alert parents.

These brief guidelines are most general, but can help you prepare for what will inevitably be a difficult situation. The assistance of a friend or other mature representative of the student's national group can be of assistance, especially if language is a problem. Sometimes tribal affiliations and customs enter into a situation. Religion can also play a role. In these cases, careful judgment must be used by you as to whether or not additional help will be a positive or negative factor.

Physically Debilitating Illnesses

Muscular dystrophy, blindness, tuberculosis, and other illnesses of equal gravity can afflict foreign students during their stay in the United States. Such tragedy can have serious impact upon the completion of his or her academic goals, and your competent guidance is needed.

Serious illness generally gives some warning of its development. However, these warning signals may have been ignored or even disbelieved by the student. In any case, the illness is not generally regarded as a "crisis" or "emergency" until the dread diagnosis is delivered. It is at this point that your intervention as an aide or counselor is needed.

Recourse to free, immediate medical advice is essential for the helping person. On campus, the university health center should act as that resource. Within the community, a medical school or cooperative physician could be tapped as a resource. The better informed you are, the better prepared you will be to help the student cope with his or her own anxieties. You should not, however, give

medical information to the student under any circumstances. This is best left to the medical professionals.

Deal with the situation realistically. Don't offer platitudes or undue optimism. Discuss all options openly and clearly. Suggest sources of assistance, both for the present and for the future. Consult your campus or community service agencies for suggestions on special services available to the blind, the wheelchair-bound, the terminally ill. Don't expect to provide the only succor to this person in distress. Assemble a group of other caring people: fellow countrymen from the campus or community, members of the student's religious group, academic colleagues, those who have lived through or are enduring the same experience in life. People need to discuss their fears and anxieties. Provide them, if possible, with a support group to substitute for the missing family. You alone cannot be all that someone needs at a time of such trouble. Realize this and act accordingly.

Health insurance also plays a key role in the discussion of serious illness. Inform the student as to the extent of the coverage. Many policies for foreign students provide only 52 weeks of coverage for any given illness or injury. In the case of serious illness, where treatment will extend for several years and the student intends to remain in the United States, seek out alternatives in insurance coverage. A new policy which does not exclude pre-existing conditions might be available. Another alternative to consider is double coverage with a new policy which begins coverage of pre-existing conditions after a six-month period of enrollment. If no suitable policies are available, begin consultations with the student's physician, a hospital social worker, or representatives of health agencies which deal with that illness regularly (i.e., the American Lung Association, the Lighthouse (for the blind), Muscular Dystrophy Association, National Cancer Foundation, etc.). Recently an enterprising international student office/association sent out a plea to foreign student advisers and student associations across the country to raise funds for an Iranian whose health insurance had expired and who faced cancer surgery and treatment. Alternatives exist. Enthusiasm, energy, and creativity are needed to explore them.

Lastly, in the case of serious illness or injury, be positive about the possibilities of continuing or resuming one's academic pursuits. One needs a rock to hold onto while facing severe, life-changing or possibly life-threatening illness.

A student needs to be aware of all of the following options: the possibility of dropping some courses and finishing others, getting a medical leave of absence for the necessary time period, "incomplete" grades, readmission after a stay at home. Never ignore the possibility of a sense of shame or disgrace that could be underlying a student's anxiety. Some diseases and injuries are not as well known and as clinically recognized in all countries of the world. A woman needing to have an ovary removed due to a cyst, or a man having a testicle removed as a result of an injury, might be profoundly shamed in some cultures. We do well to keep that in mind in view of

our often blithe attitude about illness and operations. Delicacy and extreme tact should be used in any and all discussions of serious illness or injury, both with the student and any other concerned parties with whom you might consult. It is well to keep this in mind before meeting with a seriously ill student and temper your comments with carefully chosen words.

Accidents

Accidents to foreign visitors take on greater significance due to the unfamiliarity of the foreign visitor with our health care system. It is necessary to explain emergency procedures in advance and to provide phone numbers and locations for emergency medical treatment to the new foreign visitor upon arrival. Those with families have special needs and will probably have more frequent need for the services of a hospital emergency room. The first maps given to foreign students, scholars, or visitors should have the local hospital/emergency room highlighted and you should give directions as to its location and use.

In-hospital care following an accident should be treated quite sympathetically and attentively. A personal visit is often in order. Visits from friends or roommates might be arranged. Notification to faculty and the conveying of class notes and assignments to the student by a classmate could be a morale booster, as well as pragmatic. Often a memo from you to all instructors helps to facilitate an easy resumption of classwork after recovery.

In-home care following an accident requires the cooperation of roommates or an interested third party. Although this is not necessarily difficult to arrange, suggestions in case of difficulty are:

1) a classmate, suggested by an instructor
2) a fellow countryman
3) a member of the student's religious group
4) a host family within the community
5) a neighbor of the student

There <u>are</u> resources out there. A good example to illustrate the variety of alternatives comes from the experience of an Angolan woman who was expecting her first baby. Although not generally considered an "emergency situation" or "debilitating illness," medical and practical information on prenatal and postnatal care was needed. Also, since the woman lived alone off-campus and had no real friends to help her, the foreign student office was hard pressed to offer assistance. The LaLeche League, located through the volunteer center of the community, provided a home for the woman both prior to the birth and for six weeks afterward. The loving care and instruction of a "mother"/"big sister" figure for this woman made a big difference in her ability to handle her situation. Look for alternatives.

Death of a Student

The death of a foreign student while in the United States is a tragedy of the highest degree. The logistics alone are overwhelming: notification of parents and of the consulate; an autopsy (if allowed by religious tradition); disposition of the body according to proper religious and cultural dictates; a funeral or memorial service; repatriation. In the case of a death which ensues as a result of an illness, there is some time for preparation. The following questions should be asked for preparation:

1) Religion of the student: What are the consequent implications for treatment of the body after death? funeral services?
2) Parental awareness. Immediate information transmittal is necessary. What are their wishes?
3) Repatriation. How will the cost be covered? It is very expensive (approximately $4,000) to fly a body in a coffin across the sea. Some insurance policies will cover repatriation. If this is not the case, consult the consulate. When all else fails, request payment from the parents. It may be that the university will have to underwrite the cost initially, until the parents can gather the funds and receive permission to send such a large amount out of the country.
4) If a memorial service is appropriate, what and who should be involved? Again, consult members of the student's religious group and fellow countrymen.

In the case of an accidental death, the impact upon friends and fellow countrymen can be a significant factor with which you may have to deal. Car accidents, especially when others are involved, require police reports and often autopsies. Find out, in advance, those coroners who understand different cultural traditions of treating the dead body. Insist that the body be taken there. Refuse on behalf of the family to have an autopsy performed if it will defile the body for a religious burial. If cremation is acceptable, follow procedures of finding a mortician who is familiar with this.

Gather fellow countrymen and friends of the accident victim together for a group session to share your and their sorrow and to answer their questions. Send letters to others, or to this same group, if the dimension of the tragedy seems to dictate such communication. Offer counseling, both at your office and several other campus and community sites (i.e., Health Center, residential life counselors, religious counselors). Be sincere and open to all inquiries.

Robert Klinger, in the 1967 edition of this publication, offered some valuable advice which still pertains to such situations: "If possible, a photographer should be asked to take a picture of the body as there are many times when the family doubts the death and needs the reassurance of personal identification...All possible clippings, obituaries, mortuary programs etc. [should be] sent to the family."..."After the funeral a full written report with death certificate, clippings, picture, etc., should be sent to the family, with copies to the sponsor and to the embassy, cultural attache, or otherwise. The Immigration and Naturalization Service should also be

informed with the enclosure of a dated copy of the newspaper clipping. In the case of accidental death, police reports or medical examiners' reports are available for sending to the family. Copies of all materials should be kept for the foreign student adviser's files." (1)

The case of suicide is a separate issue and will be dealt with in a later chapter.

AIDS

As advisers and counselors, many concerned professionals and community members have started to ask about AIDS and its impact upon the foreign student population. What effect would a positive test indicating exposure or a diagnosis of AIDS have upon the educational activities and life-style of a foreign student in your community? How can you assist this person in such a situation? What position does the university have in regard to this widely publicized, contagious, feared, and fatal disease?

Education and medical attention are the two major components of the foreign student adviser's responsibility to the foreign student with regard to AIDS. As with many sexually transmitted diseases, education as to the prevention of infection, the conditions under which the disease may be contracted, and the ramifications of the disease should be provided to the students. Health centers on campus are a convenient source of education. However, the foreign student office will be the first, most available source of education for the foreign student. You might contact a local public health education outreach service, or a local nursing or medical school to arrange a seminar on sexually transmitted diseases, mentioning AIDS among the topics to be discussed. Such a seminar might be couched in other terms, such as social problems, health concerns, or dating issues. A brochure, such as "AIDS: What Everyone Should Know" might be ordered from the American College Health Association, 15879 Crabbs Branch Way, Rockville, Maryland 20855. Sufficient copies for inclusion in an orientation packet can be ordered at a reasonable cost. A discussion of sexually transmitted diseases and the role prostitutes play in the spread of these diseases might be introduced during the orientation program. A speaker from a health center might be the best choice for such a topic, and attendance should be optional.

The foreign student adviser may have to deal with unfounded fears among community members pertaining to potential "high risk groups." Educators and medical experts have stated that it is <u>not</u> certain groups of individuals, but certain <u>types</u> of behavior that increase susceptibility to AIDS. This is truly a time of fear in the world

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(1) M. Robert Klinger, <u>Handbook for Foreign Student Advisers on Emergency Situations Involving Foreign Students</u>, National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, Washington, D.C., 1967, p. 5.

and under such circumstances people act irrationally. We must maintain a rational perspective and offer education and advice to those concerned about the issue.

Advice to the foreign student adviser who is counseling a student who has been exposed, tests positive, or has a diagnosis of AIDS includes the following ideas:

1) Determine if there is a definite diagnosis of AIDS by a medical authority. There is a test, the HIV (HTLV-III/LAV), which is available at hospitals and some university health centers.
2) Determine whether or not health insurance coverage will be available. If unavailable, seek alternatives. A return home may be the only realistic financial alternative.
3) Students can continue classes and living with others. The only danger of infection comes from the exchange of bodily fluids.
4) A medical practitioner or public health counselor should discuss the ethics of further sexual activity with the infected individual.
5) The AIDS victim is very susceptible to any type of infection. The common cold can literally kill. Advise extra caution in all life activities to avoid exposure to infection.

A last word of advice to the counselor or foreign student adviser: It is very likely that no one at a university will ever know if a student has AIDS. This information is highly confidential. If you become aware of it, respect this confidentiality.

Chapter 2

Personal Crises in the United States

Academic Failure

Academic success is a major goal of most visiting foreign students. As one Nigerian woman put it: "I am the first of 27 children in my family (extended family) to attend college. Every move I make is very carefully watched. Whatever I do will greatly affect the future of the 26 who hope to follow me." Academic success can be defined from many perspectives. However, failure is a cold, harsh reality which seems to strike at the core of one's self-esteem more readily than a sense of success. Any contradiction to expectation can be perceived as failure. Therefore, the foreign student who earns a "C" grade on a paper, a final, or for a course could regard that as a significant failure. "F" grades, probation, advice to withdraw, or academic suspension are all potential triggers for emotional reaction, perhaps even instability. At the graduate level, consequences of failure are even more severe. Failed comprehensive exams could render a Ph.D. candidate ineligible to continue on for the final stages of the degree, the dissertation. This failure, after years of hard work and study and usually an intense, stressful period of exam preparation can cause a nervous breakdown or violent action. It can happen with American students as well. Cases which make the news regularly illustrate the truth of this scenario.

Advice to the intervening person includes several areas:

1) Be in close contact with the student's academic adviser. Hopefully, you will already have well-established links with the departments. Ascertain what the real situation is.
2) Let the student talk it out. The pent-up fears will provide you with a more substantial basis upon which to judge the problem.
3) Dispel some of the anger and fear. Try to put the situation into perspective. Defuse the threatening tone and the most serious aspects of the problem, if possible.
4) Provide alternatives in a positive sense. Be as specific as possible.
5) Be caring of and sensitive to the student's present self-perception, which is significantly damaged.

In situations where violence appears to be a real possibility, alert proper authorities and those in danger. Work with the student until the crisis passes. Be available even afterward for counseling or consultation. The reality of an academic crisis is that it will pass and other parts of life will eventually resume priority. The urgency of the moment is what demands our response.

Marital Infidelity/Divorce

Marital infidelity and/or divorce is very difficult for the foreign family in another culture to endure. What complicates a situation is

when both partners are students and your affiliation with each is professionally equal. A knowledge of your campus and/or community family counseling services is a prerequisite in this type of situation. Professionally trained marriage counselors are far more capable of providing real and psychological help at such times than untrained, albeit "caring" people. However, the major role we, as culturally sensitive intervening people, play in these cases is to provide information about and make such services attractive to the foreign student and/or his/her spouse. The social services which can be so helpful in these cases are not commonly known about or understood around the world. Marital problems are generally not discussed with others in most cultures, and if they are, it is only with trusted, elder family members.

However, in the United States, in the absence of these family members, the foreign student adviser, the well-respected dean, the friendly host family, or the religious leader may be placed in the role of confidante, mediator, or judge. The best advice is to listen but offer no judgment. Discuss counseling options. When divorce is inevitable, discuss legal considerations openly and frankly. The immigration status of spouse and dependents comes into immediate danger. In the case of subsequent marriage to an American, the question of benefits of joint custody versus single custody may arise. This is again an occasion for you to call upon your established network of legal resources. Understand the options yourself. Assist the individuals involved in finding affordable legal aid. Advise them to consult with their consulate to find out about possible legal implications in their home countries.

Maintain confidentiality at all levels of interaction. A complicated case could involve several tiers of students, family members, faculty, fellow countrymen, and interested friends. You have been trusted as a family member, and that burden can rest heavily upon one's shoulders. Professional ethics, as well as meeting the personal challenge of confidentiality, can place one in a difficult position. By our training and integrity we can meet the challenge.

Abuse

Abuse in contemporary Western society has been exposed and acknowledged as a major problem. It was not always so, and it definitely is not the case in many non-Western societies. Therefore, abuse in the family of the foreign student or scholar becomes even more elusive and difficult to handle.

Cases of abuse are often discovered via campus security reports, housing staff counselors or, in the case of child abuse, elementary school officials. The foreign student adviser or other intervening person must have available a set of resources upon which he or she can depend for help in such an emergency. Research beforehand is mandatory. Shelters for abused wives exist in many cities. However, the criteria for acceptance is crucial. Are non-U.S. citizens accepted? Are children accepted? Will emergency clothing, bedding,

and personal hygiene items be provided if someone arrives with no personal possessions except the clothes on her back (often the case)? These are the major factors to ascertain in advance. Secondarily, it is helpful to know the answers to these questions as well: (1) Is there a cost? What is it? Are there any exceptions? (2) How long can a wife/woman stay? children? (3) Can one cook one's own food there? Are meals provided? (4) Is counseling provided? Are any cross-culturally trained counselors available?

Most shelters for the abused are at undisclosed locations. You must enlist the help of campus security or the city police to drive the victim to the shelter. Preparing a woman for this type of assistance can be a challenge. Fear of incurring further wrath is one element to be considered. Cultural tradition of respect for one's husband is extremely strong and can sometimes outweigh the hurt and anger of the moment.

Advice from a counseling unit which specializes in abused persons might be of some assistance to you. Private consultation with a very trusted individual from that culture may be necessary. Intense, warm, personal discussion with the victim is needed. If a friend or relative can be found, the situation may be made easier.

In the cases where a shelter is unavailable, inappropriate, or unacceptable to the victim, several other alternatives may be explored. Religious organizations are often helpful. A family with the same religious affiliation may accept the victim into their home. This may provide more of a culturally acceptable solution. The local women's association may have a list of members who assist in such cases, or suggestions for "safe" places to go. It is essential that the location be kept confidential. Do not put the victim into a dorm or living center to which her spouse would have access.

Discussion groups with women on a regular basis, especially including wives of foreign students, can expose the reality of abuse and make the alternatives known in a public fashion. Many foreign wives/women are unaware of the services which exist to help them in such situations. Preventive measures may be possible. Prior knowledge could possibly lessen the number or magnitude of abuse situations on your campus.

Death of a Spouse or Child

The death of a spouse or child can be even more complex than the aforementioned death of a student. Immediate attention to the logistics of the situation can provide the best "first-aid." Culturally and religiously approved procedures for attending to the body are difficult to arrange, and the foreign visitor who is suffering the trauma of such a loss is not capable of attending to such detail. Insurance payments for the medical care connected with the illness or injury which led to the death must be arranged. Enlist the aid of other foreign nationals from that culture, and from the religious tradition of the family. Offer to assist in concrete,

tangible ways: contact a funeral home, arrange for repatriation of the body; arrange the flight home for the student, if desired, and for a leave of absence from the university, if appropriate. Sympathy, warmth, and sincerity are required. Your own experience with personal loss is helpful. Campus or community self-support groups can provide a source of comfort in some cases.

Don't be afraid to speak of the deceased. Open discussion of the spouse or the child can serve to keep the experience in perspective. Discuss your own reactions and questions with other experienced counselors or advisers to gain from their knowledge. Attend whatever funeral or other type of service is arranged. Be there as a support. Help them live through the tragedy and resume their own lives.

Chapter 3

Personal Crises Originating in the Home Country

Illness of a Family Member

When illness strikes a family member in the home country, the first reaction a foreign student generally experiences is anxiety and a desire to return home "to be there." Often the return of the student can do nothing to ameliorate the situation. An abandonment of one's studies for futile trips abroad should be discouraged. When, in fact, the student's presence is not needed by his family, the role of the adviser should be to dissuade the student from taking the trip home. This can be perceived as harsh advice, and somewhat heartless, but when all is considered, it is generally the best advice.

Occasionally a student will seek your help in obtaining medical supplies for an ill relative at home. The assistance of your campus health service would be appropriate in such a case. At times, a student seeks your help in obtaining specialized Western medical help in the United States for his relative. Complications from this request are myriad because of these factors: (1) no health insurance for visitors will cover "pre-existing" conditions; (2) it is difficult to find a place to stay for the duration of treatment without seriously disrupting the foreign student's program of study; (3) securing promises of treatment from a physician prior to examination is almost impossible to obtain; and (4) obtaining the proper visa to enter the United States. Be quite wary in your response to such requests for help.

Death of a Family Member

The news of the death of a family member abroad is most often received by the foreign student with grief and guilt. The guilt arises from his sense of being absent at a time of greatest need. The death of a mother seems to engender the most traumatic response. Victims of the loss need to be told that their subsequent presence at funeral proceedings is not likely to alter the sense of loss they are experiencing. The financial expenditure and academic setback that an unplanned trip home can have on a student seldom equates with the beneficial aspects of his presence after the death. This is not always the case, and special care should be taken to listening to what the student really feels he can do.

Again, support for grieving family members exists in most communities. These are helpful self-support groups. Contact your community mental health organization for reference to such a group in your area.

Parental Discord/Divorce

The instability of the relationship of one's parents can disrupt the sense of security the individual feels in any setting. When the child is removed from the parent by thousands of miles, the sense of impotency and even guilt is compounded for the student. It is necessary to dispel these anxieties in order to enable the student to function at normal levels.

The cultural differences involved may further complicate the situation. In a setting where the student may have to return to the father's home where there is a new wife, perhaps the same age as the student or even younger, counseling may be needed as to acceptable alternatives to returning home for summer vacation. For example, a period of summer practical training may be an option which would mask the true reason for failing to visit the "home" until the situation becomes more palatable.

In certain cases, a question of affiliation becomes paramount. If a student must choose between parents, certain issues such as financial support or residency may arise. Options need to be explored openly and honestly. Assistance may need to be obtained from the related consulates. In some countries, a father's permission is needed for the exit visa for a woman to leave the country. If the father was opposed to his daughter's education, she could become a pawn in the divorce proceedings.

A son can be used, especially by a mother, as the substitute leader of the family. If a student is suddenly faced with the decision of continuing his studies in the United States or returning home to assume such a role, counseling may be needed. It would be helpful to obtain some cultural background from an older, trusted member of that national group. A religious leader from the student's religious affiliation might be called upon, as well, to provide another perspective for the student. The student will be facing a tremendous conflict, and the talking-it-out process can be very helpful. Care should be taken not to impose one's own value or judgment in the case, but to help the student open his mind to all possible alternatives and consequences of his actions. Leaves of absence,their length, and the readmittance process should also be discussed openly, so as to view any possible discontinuation of studies as only an interruption and not a termination of the educational program in the United States.

Political Strife at Home

It often happens that a political situation in the home country seriously disrupts or disturbs a student or group of students enrolled in U.S. academic programs. The most dramatic example of this was the Iranian Revolution in 1979, a time when the total number of Iranian students in the U.S. was reported to be between 50,000 and 75,000. The impact of the sudden revolution, the taking and holding of the American hostages for 444 days, the U.S. presidential action

barring any entry of Iranian citizens into this country for approximately one year was tremendous. Emotional, psychological, physiological, financial, and legal problems ensued for a great number of Iranian students. The implication for all foreign students and their advisers was significant. The benefit of that experience can help others prepare for and respond to such crises in the future.

A political turnover has far-ranging effects on foreign nationals outside their country. It is very difficult to assess the true nature of the situation when so far removed. Phone conversations are limited, if even possible, due to fear of wiretapping and/or disconnection. A sad truism which one must acknowledge in order to better empathize with the student is that world news coverage in this country is very limited and U.S.-biased. Foreign students, especially at times of crisis in their home country, want up-to-the-minute reporting from an accurate, unbiased perspective. Access to shortwave radio and international news reports is critical.

The U.S. media seek responses from foreign nationals to most major political changes abroad. The foreign student adviser should expect to be contacted the moment news breaks of any crisis. In such a case, it is the responsibility of the foreign student adviser, or other concerned adviser, to protect the rights of the foreign national in your charge. Ascertain from the students first if they choose to be interviewed. If so, prepare them for the type of harassing to which they will be subject, and especially warn them about the editing which will take place. Provide a student's name and phone number to the media only after the student has given his/her consent.

The foreign student adviser is often requested to give interviews. Clear any such action with your institution's administration in advance. Occasionally a university requires that all such requests be funneled through the public affairs office. Be aware in advance of your university's policy. If interviewed, be careful in your choice of words and political leanings. Misquotes, partial quotes, or editing can distort a great deal of what you say. Students will remember what you've said for a long time, and misinterpretations can create disharmony or a lack of respect for you and/or your position. Community members also will take your comments very seriously and form judgments of the whole university based on what you say. For example, during the Iranian crisis, a foreign student adviser might have been inclined to reveal that the university allowed 150 Iranian students to register and attend classes for an entire semester without prepayment of the tuition. This direct contradiction of ironclad university policy, negotiated with the administrative powers, was a true concession by them in recognition of the millions of dollars that Iranian students were bringing into the university. However, such a comment, innocently offered by the foreign student adviser to the media as an example of the university's largesse, could be a fiery spark to an indignant American parent whose son or daughter was not allowed to register due to a lack of funds! We, as foreign student advisers, may be limited to our perspective when dealing with a crisis. We must be wary of the pitfalls which can occur as a result.

Political strife at home causes tremendous financial problems for foreign nationals. Currency exchange is often one of the first areas to be examined and made more secure with a new government. An advance network of good relations with the bursar (business office) and the university registrar will help you in facilitating the continuation of a student's education during such times. Access to sources of financial assistance within the community are also essential. Food distribution centers, clothing relief shops, and other sources of assistance should be known to you. Further discussion of financial crises is presented in Chapter 5.

A revolution or coup d'etat in the home country can also create political strife on the campus or in the community. Emergency security measures must often be taken when the potential for injury or disaster looms. In past years, the Arab-Israeli conflicts have been a primary source of concern. Campus and community security forces go on extra alert whenever debates are scheduled to discuss related issues. The Lebanese conflict has necessitated precautions against terrorist activity and student versus student conflicts, even violent conflict. The foreign student adviser must understand the underlying sentiments involved and be able to assist both sides in resolving the conflict. At moments of fever-pitch intensity, alternatives need to be available, such as removing one group of students from the campus for a few days.

Emotional and psychological reactions to political strife at home must be acknowledged. One's sense of self-identity becomes disturbed when one's country is in turmoil. It becomes increasingly difficult for the foreign national to maintain an identity with his home when that home itself is changing. Such a situation can lead to a sort of identity search here. Assistance one might provide could be through the promotion of interaction among the members of that national group: a discussion group on the issue at a neutral center, such as the international student office. Knowledgeable, sympathetic outsiders (faculty, administrators, religious, or community leaders) could be asked to attend or speak. The foreign nationals themselves may wish to present a forum on the topic. Your support, tangible as well as intangible, is essential.

Physical ailments can arise as a result of serious anxiety. This fact should be recognized at such times. The medical authorities on the campus or in the community should be appraised of the nature and implications of the political strife so as to be cognizant of its potential physiological effects. Illness on the part of the foreign national following a political turnover in his country may be a direct or indirect result of his anxiety or guilt (for not being there; for his support of one side or the other; for his lack of support of "the cause"). While the illness must be medically treated as such, the psychological components should be treated as well. The health center or community hospital may be completely unaware of the world event. Your educational efforts are called for in this situation.

Chapter 4

Legal Crises

A foreign national in the United States can face three basic legal crises: immigration-related charges, civil charges, or criminal charges. Whatever the nature of the crisis, the foreign student adviser (or other person assisting the student) must consult with experienced legal authorities prior to advising the student. This returns to the refrain throughout this handbook: "Be prepared." Have several sources of legal assistance well established in your network of contacts both on campus and in the community. Many campuses have both legal associations for their own administrative functions and free, student legal assistance. In addition to these sources, establish a relationship with at least one or two well-respected lawyers in the community from whom you can obtain legal advice. Exercise caution in giving actual legal advice yourself. You run the risk of a lawsuit if your advice is incorrect!

Immigration Legal Problems

Immigration law is quite restrictive as regards nonimmigrants in the United States, especially students. Violation of these laws generally stems from illegal employment or failure to maintain status in the United States. In some instances, the experienced assistance of the foreign student adviser will suffice to help the student through remedial or corrective legal procedures. However, in more severe circumstances or when preliminary efforts have failed, it is necessary to refer the student to a qualified immigration lawyer. Be alert to the fact that few lawyers are truly versed in immigration law. Know the lawyer's work before making a recommendation. Immigration work is quite lucrative (which translates into being quite expensive for the student/client) and many lawyers will advertise themselves as immigration lawyers in the phone book, but their knowledge may be limited to filing an alien preference petition. If a student must appear before an immigration judge, it is well advised for him to have legal counsel.

Many immigration situations which are perceived by the foreign student as emergencies or crises are not, in fact, very serious. Immigration procedures via the mails can remedy many critical situations. For example, an F-2 student can be denied entry by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) at the border if he cannot present a Form I-20AB, if his visa has expired, or if no visa corresponding to his student status exists in his passport. The INS may allow the student into the United States to complete documentation upon arrival at the college. Airlines face serious fines (up to $1000) if they have allowed an alien to enter the country on their aircraft without a proper visa. Occasionally, visa status adjustment can be done in the United States if extenuating circumstances can be proven. Sometimes a student will need to leave the United States and obtain the proper visa outside U.S. territory. It has been possible

under certain conditions to obtain the proper visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate in Canada or Mexico. However, more often, a student must return to his home country to obtain the proper visa. It may be possible for you, as a foreign student adviser, to obtain an extension of stay until the end of the semester so that the travel transpires during the school vacation.

If the I-20 was the only missing document for admission, it is generally possible to submit a new I-20 and mail it to the INS office having jurisdiction over your school, together with the I-94, I-20 ID, and I-515 which the student should have. Other immigration procedures are explained in the NAFSA Adviser's Manual of Federal Regulations Affecting Foreign Students and Scholars, and you should be well-versed in its content. When a question arises that cannot be answered by the manual, contact INS directly (hopefully you already have a well-established contact there), an experienced foreign student adviser at another institution, or the government relations staff at the NAFSA Central Office. Most professionals in the field are willing to provide assistance to their colleagues at such times.

Bond cases: "Bond cases are usually caused when the admitting INS officer has reason to believe that the student may actually be coming for immigration purposes but is using the nonimmigrant status as a subterfuge. The bond guarantees departure--if the person does not depart at the conclusion of studies, the bond is forfeited. Arrangements for the bond are often difficult, but agencies in large cities where most students enter can help." (2)

Civil Proceedings

The foreign student may find himself in a position of violating U.S. civil laws. In such cases, although the sanction is monetary and not imprisonment, the student can be anxious and fearful of the unknown element of our judicial system. Hopefully, campus legal assistance should be available to him free of charge. The foreign student adviser might try to intercede between the student and the plaintiff and mediate an out-of-court settlement. A lawsuit is an expensive and emotionally draining experience and should be avoided whenever possible. If the foreign student adviser doesn't feel as though (s)he has the necessary experience to negotiate a settlement, another campus or community authority might be asked to assist in the situation.

If the matter cannot be resolved out of court, legal assistance is needed. Where campus services are not available, community resources should be consulted. A legal aid society is probably listed in the phone book. If this doesn't yield any help, contact the county bar

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(2) M. Robert Klinger, Handbook for Foreign Student Advisers on Emergency Situations Involving Foreign Student. National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, Washington, D.C. 1967, p. 6.

association and seek its assistance in locating an attorney who will provide his services free of charge. All attorneys agree, in principle, in their code of ethics to provide some free legal services as "pro bono" work. It is up to you to convince them that your student is needful and deserving of these services.

Criminal Proceedings/Arrest

Different "crimes" result in different sanctions or penalties. Those less serious, "civil crimes," generally impose only monetary sanctions. The more serious, "criminal charges," often carry with them prison sentences. Prison, for a foreign student, even if only overnight, is a terrifying, humiliating experience. All efforts must be made to raise bail when a foreign student is imprisoned. Often a campus has the services of a bail bondsman to whom the foreign student adviser can turn in such cases. If not, locate one on your own and establish a rapport. Generally, the fee for his services is a percentage of the actual bond he will post on releasing the foreign student to your custody. You can recoup the money from the student later.

The support of his fellow countrymen is crucial at such times. A student who has been imprisoned will have experienced a significant loss of self-esteem. The traditional family "unconditional love and support" that an individual usually finds in times of stress, the foreign student will find from his fellow countrymen. Often they will contribute from their own meager funds to raise bail if no other means exists.

There are many levels of criminal charges, and the best advice you can give to a student is for him to obtain the best legal counsel he can afford (or you have arranged) and to rely upon that counsel. You can offer to contact the embassy or sponsor, if applicable, but it is not advisable to do so without the student's consent.

Misdemeanor charges are not uncommon (such as "driving while intoxicated" or "disorderly conduct"), but felony charges, while fewer, are much more serious. Drug possession is grounds for immediate and irrevocable deportation.

The position of the foreign student adviser may be difficult. Without full knowledge of the truth of the situation, it is difficult to counsel and support the student while upholding U.S. law. The foreign student adviser may need to assist the judge and prosecution in understanding the student's culture and background. In rare cases, the actions of the student would have been legal in his home country. The foreign student adviser may well have to interact with the media in some cases, also, so as to prevent adverse, prejudicial judgments by the public of the nationality group of the student involved in the criminal charges. Documentation about the case should be preserved in a file for future inspection by interested, involved parties (i.e., embassy officials, sponsors, parents).

Conviction and sentencing for some crimes, such as moral turpitude and drugs, are legal grounds for deportation. Interpretation as to whether the acts in question can lead to deportation is best left in the hands of the student's attorney and the INS.

Chapter 5

Financial Crises

Financial crises are brought about through a variety of factors. Generic solutions can be suggested, and will be discussed later in this chapter. However, it is also important to look at the underlying causes or potential causes of financial crisis. This "preparation for crisis" can help in two ways: (1) the advance knowledge of potential financial emergencies can help one prepare alternatives, and (2) advance knowledge may help avert or lessen the severity of the financial emergency. For this reason, then, four different types of financial crises will be examined, and suggestions offered as to their management. In summary, ideas on handling financial crises in general will be offered.

Political Situations in the Home Country

Political situations in the home country have major impact upon the financial security a foreign national enjoys outside his country. Currency exchange regulations are one of the first areas of governmental control to be tightened. Any political turbulence abroad can be expected to have financial implications for a foreign student. As the adviser, you should be aware of university regulations regarding extensions of tuition payment deadlines, housing payments, waivers of late payment fees, etc. The use of promissory notes by your bursar or business office can be a temporary solution for one semester's registration. An extended or installment payment plan can also provide relief under certain circumstances.

When funds are totally cut, such as the Nigerian Government did for all undergraduate study in recent years, students need to be informed and made to understand the realistic alternatives available to them. Many universities have now required prepayment of one year's tuition and living expenses for all Nigerian students. The enrollment of Nigerians has consequently diminished, but the extreme financial destitution of Nigerian students has also been alleviated on those campuses. Measures as drastic as that may be in order.

Sponsored Students

Regulations imposed upon sponsored students may also impact upon their financial security. The situation of marriage, pregnancy, and children is often a financial crisis issue with the sponsored student. First, if the sponsor does not authorize the marriage, often the student(s) will not inform the sponsor of the marriage. In such a case, of course, health insurance coverage of the two individuals will not extend to cover pregnancy or subsequent children. Even in cases of sanctioned marriages, often the spouse is not covered by the student's insurance, which has been provided by the sponsor. In order to obtain coverage, therefore, a student must find another

insurance agency and pay a high premium for family coverage. It sometimes happens that the student chooses not to so encumber himself at the time of marriage. Thus the financial crisis develops: pregnancy, childbirth, and raising a family. Normal maternity care, a three-day hospital stay, and well-child care for the newborn cost at least $3,000. It could be more in high-cost areas or in the case of problem pregnancies, deliveries, or if a child is born needing medical care. The foreign student adviser is often the only responsible, caring individual the hospital and/or foreign student can rely upon to find a resolution to this problem. Some suggestions are:

1) Seeking use of in-hospital funding sources for persons unable to pay their expenses. Such funds exist; social workers in the hospital will work with the student and spouse.
2) Support by a religious organization. Especially in the case of pregnancy and childbirth, many religious organizations have specially designated funds for assisting women through these times.
3) Community health centers. Prenatal care of the mother and well-child care for the infant can be obtained either free or at very low cost from a variety of community health sources, even for nonimmigrants. Seek those out in advance so that you have this information available to offer at times of need.
4) Discuss the sponsor's obligation with the sponsor. Perhaps some help can be obtained through this source.

With sponsored students, the question of financial emergency becomes more interesting when a dispute arises between the student and the sponsor over payments or support. A financial crisis may arise through no real fault of the student (e.g., his apartment is vandalized with significant financial loss) and the assignment of responsibility for the emergency can be a difficult task. The foreign student adviser, in such cases, needs to remain neutral. One can be supportive of the student, but maintenance of future good relations with the sponsor demands neutrality. The best offense is, once again, a good defense. Know your usual sponsors (IIE, Fulbright, Rotary, AMIDEAST, AAI, LASPAU, USAID, etc.) and have a first-name working relationship with at least one responsible officer in each organization. Be able to call them for an honest, frank discussion of the financial crisis. Learn the facts, and then feel comfortable discussing options with the student.

Loss of a Sponsor

The loss of a sponsor is also difficult for the student and for the university. It can happen for any number of reasons: political, economic, academic, personal. Whatever the reason, you must be prepared to help the student through this time period, and help him find alternative sources of funding. It is also helpful if you hold personal discussions with the sponsor to ascertain why the sponsorship was discontinued and if there is any hope of resumption.

In any case, one may assume that a sponsored student was a cut above the rest from his country. The university may have an interest in

continuing the support of a high-caliber student. Make some phone calls to university departments. Ask for their help. Would the sponsor be willing to write a recommendation?

Family Situations

Family situations can also lead to financial emergencies. In the previous paragraphs, pregnancy and childbirth were mentioned as related to sponsored students. However, individual or privately funded students face similar problems when insurance will not cover pregnancy or childbirth (generally excluded as "a pre-existing condition"). In addition to the alternatives already mentioned, networking with national group members in the community can often yield positive results. An Israeli (emigre) obstetrician gave his services free of charge to a young Israeli wife who discovered that she was pregnant two weeks after arrival in the United States. A Korean obstetrician/gynecologist delivers all Korean babies within a 60-mile radius of his hospital, regardless of financial status. He adjusts his rates accordingly. Midwives are also an acceptable alternative to in-hospital delivery in most states and can result in a much less expensive delivery, with no in-hospital care charges.

Death of a Parent

Another, more poignant, family situation which can lead to financial crisis is the death of a parent, especially a father. The earlier discussion (in Chapter 4) of the death of a parent pertains here, but in addition, the financial implications should be recognized.

In many countries, the death of the father/husband of the family represents the end of any source of income to the family. "Social Security benefits" are not a universal concept! The financial well-being of the entire family may well be shaken, and the student will be affected. As foreign student adviser or counselor, friend, or host, your best role is that of a sympathetic friend. Do not offer loans or monetary gifts to see the student through this difficult period. Things will only get worse in such a case. Discuss realistic alternatives. INS will generally authorize off-campus employment (on a part-time basis during the academic year, full-time during vacations) when a student can prove "extreme financial need due to unforeseen changes in his financial circumstances since arrival," after a student's first 12 months in the United States. The death of a father would usually be regarded as justification for obtaining employment authorization. You might advise the student to obtain a copy of the death certificate or obituary, if either is available. If they are not in English, advise him to have a translation prepared as well. A student who suffers the loss of the family member who was supporting him may feel a deep sense of guilt ("it was the extra work needed to support me that killed him"). As friend, adviser, or counselor, you need to dispel that guilt, as well as aid the student in finding alternatives.

Looking within your institution may yield positive results. Although many institutions are unable to grant scholarships or other grants to foreign students in general, they are able to help at mid-year in unusual circumstances. Establish a good rapport with your financial aid officer in advance, and use it at such times.

Life-Style

Extravagance in a life-style can easily and quickly lead to a financial crisis for a foreign student. Trying to adapt to perceived (although often erroneous or misleading) American social habits, the foreign student may overspend in an effort to be accepted. Entertaining, hosting, drugs, and drinking are the four areas which have given foreign students trouble. An overpriced life-style can also include such extras as extravagant apartments, sports cars, and high phone bills (it is not unusual to see monthly long-distance phone bills totalling $600 for a student who is lonely and doesn't budget his money, and that results in an annual expenditure of $7,200 for phone bills!). A student will seek help in a financial crisis when he begins to feel the pressure of this life-style. One should be prepared to examine all of the aforementioned issues with the student in order to find solutions. Debt counseling is available through many campus and/or community service offices. Banks often offer this service.

One delicate issue to consider when trying to ascertain the cause of a financial crisis is the student's relationship with a member of the opposite sex. Foreign men are especially vulnerable to the fiscal chicanery of some disreputable women, who accept large financial "gifts" in exchange for their company. It is not unusual for male foreign students to be trapped into paying large sums of money (which had been intended for tuition) for legal assistance in paternity suits, or to avoid legal action in such situations. This area should be considered if no other source of financial loss can be found.

The foreign student adviser can find out about financial crises in many ways. One campus was disturbed by foreign wives putting their small children into trash dumpsters to pick out discarded clothing, furniture, and occasionally even food! The ethnic groups involved denied allegations of child abuse or public health violations. They were simply taking advantage of Western wastefulness in contrast to their extreme poverty. The counseling needed to be very directive and corrective, with advice given as to alternative ways of alleviating a poverty-level life-style.

Malnutrition among foreign students should be reported to the foreign student adviser by the campus or community health centers. Although, technically, the foreign student may be receiving funds for his support, he may be actually existing on a fraction of those funds in order to send money home. Realistic budgeting and alternative food sources should be discussed. Sometimes a foreign student can obtain on-campus employment (part-time) in a dining hall or in a fraternity/sorority house and eat his meals free of charge.

Sources of Financial Crisis Relief

Campus

One needs to seek sources of relief from campus offices. A listing is provided here to assist you in thinking about possible sources and their potential aid.

Financial Aid Office: tuition remittance; short term loan
Bursar (Business Office): deferred payment plan, installment payment plan, promissory note
Housing Office: deferred room or board charges
Collection Office: delay on collection actions
Religious Offices: tangible assistance from congregation, i.e., food, clothing, money; temporary housing if needed
Faculty: personal interests may motivate individual faculty to assist in tangible ways. An appeal via a faculty meeting or dean's council by the foreign student adviser could be effective.
Student Affairs/Dean of Students: discretionary funds may be available for short-term loans; the influence of this office may effect granting of deferred payment plans by other offices, or tuition scholarships
Student Employment Office: on-campus employment opportunities

Community

Social Services Department:

1) Free food give-away: open to financially eligible nonimmigrants; advance application approval must be granted; details as to application process, time, date, place of free food give-away are available through this office
2) Food stamps: American-born children of nonimmigrants are eligible for food stamps
3) Community kitchens: sites of free lunches; open to financially eligible nonimmigrants. Free meals dispensed on regular schedules in many communities.

Public Health: sources of free or "sliding scale" health care, including maternity, well-child clinic, immunizations, routine care.
Legal Aid Society: free or "sliding scale" legal assistance provided
Volunteer Center: ("Help Line"/"Information and Referral Service") In many communities, a 24-hour information and referral service provides information as to a wealth of community services available, generally free of charge. Some of these services include debt counseling, 24-hour phone-in crisis counseling, LaLeche League (excellent source of support for pregnant and nursing women), and an emergency financial assistance program. Have the phone numbers readily available for immediate referral.
WICS: a program which provides food assistance to financially eligible pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children under the age of five

Religious Organizations: can provide a wide variety of resources, especially through organized charities such as Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Jewish Family Services, etc.

Service/Philanthropic Organizations: many such clubs or organizations exist which formally or informally assist persons in financial distress. Make contact with existent organizations in your community, state, and region. Some suggestions include Rotary, Elks, Lions, Masons, Altrusa.

Professional and/or Ethnic Associations: tuition scholarships and/or maintenance are offered by a variety of these associations. Keep a file for future reference, and keep it updated. Make annual contact with a representative of each association so that you and your institution will be familiar to them when your student applies for financial aid. A few of these associations are: AAUW (American Association of University Women), Makarious Foundation, Taraknath Das Foundation (Indian), and PEO International Peace Scholarship.

These are some ideas upon which to build a network of alternatives in situations of financial crisis. Remember that you are looking for both short-term and long-term solutions. Don't be overly optimistic, but do provide some tangible help. Whatever you do will be a relief to the student in need.

Chapter 6

Suicide

A suicide is a shocking occurrence, and the impact is much more severe when the victim is a foreign national. The implications are complex, and the ramifications can be far-reaching. The foreign student adviser should be steeled for an unusual test of personal strength, emotional stability, and resourcefulness if faced with such a situation.

The first notification of the death of a foreign student would generally come to the foreign student adviser via campus security or city police. Assistance from the foreign student adviser in identification of the body and notification of next of kin follows. It is often helpful, sometimes essential, to enlist the services of a trusted fellow countryman(woman) at such a time, both for moral support and for help with the language and the cultural traditions associated with such an event. The embassy or sponsor can be quite helpful, sometimes even assuming the tasks associated with such a death.

Contact with the embassy and/or sponsor is essential. The embassy may send a representative to investigate the death and confirm the truth of the "suicide" nature of the death. Sponsors may be involved for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is financial. Some insurance policies exclude repatriation costs, or exclude such costs in the case of suicide. Then the question of finances and repatriation becomes critically linked to the actual nature of the death.

Suicide victims leave a trail of guilt behind them. It is helpful for the foreign student adviser to offer condolences to all affected friends and fellow nationals. A letter sent out to all of these students expressing your sympathy and offering an open door to anyone who wants to talk is a warm and welcomed action.

Background information on the student will have to be provided to the proper authorities and the media. Parents may call you for more and more information. Relatives may visit your office, probing further details. Care should be taken not to reveal confidential information to unauthorized or tangential persons.

Attempted suicide should be handled directly as a psychiatric issue, and medical authorities need to be consulted immediately. The foreign student adviser should discuss further steps with the psychiatrist before initiating any further action. Whether or not the parents, embassy, or sponsor should be notified might be discussed with the psychiatrist. Campus authorities should be notified if the attempted suicide was off-campus. Faculty and medical authorities play a crucial role in the future recovery of the student. Exact notes and details should be kept in a permanent file. Investigations of such deaths can go on for years. Family members may continue their own pursuit of "answers" long after the

legal investigation is completed. Keep newspaper reports and make personal notes on a daily basis of meetings/interviews held and with whom, names of students and/or others who came in to see you about this, memoirs of the memorial service or funeral, plus whatever else you may have. It might all be needed at some future time.

Reference should be made to Chapter 1 in which the death of a student is discussed in general terms. One final note, albeit perhaps too clinical: Identification of a dead body can be most difficult, especially a number of hours after death. Body shape changes with bloating and resulting disfiguration. The dead body will not exactly resemble the living student you once knew. Steel yourself for that reality.

Chapter 7

Murder

The reality of murder can strike on any campus and the international community is by no means immune. It happens that a foreign student is the victim of a murder on campus, and it happens that a foreign student is a murderer. We must recognize that a foreign student can be displaced enough in his own personality to commit a violent act. The ability to cope with such a tragedy on your campus or in your community lies in large part in the preparation for crisis which is in place. A review follows of preparatory steps which specifically come into play in a murder crisis.

Cultural cues need to be read and understood by authorities in advance. Psychological insight, especially as provided by cross-cultural psychologists, must be made available to those in positions of counseling and advising foreign students. Arrange in-service training sessions for yourself and your staff, perhaps even inviting other interested or related university/community personnel. Attend such educational seminars which may be offered by other departments, especially a guidance and counseling department. Be aware of deviant behavior in advance so that you are better equipped to handle it when the crisis arises.

Know your population. Identify stress points. Be aware of what is happening world-wide which might motivate discord. There are outside forces, often political, which lie beyond the individual psychological state. Prepare your campus security for crisis when world circumstances dictate. Have an emergency protocol in place on your campus, of which the international student office is an integral part. If none currently exists, discuss the organization of such with campus security and the vice president or vice chancellor for university/student affairs. When a crisis with a foreign national occurs, make certain that the related offices are all in communication with each other and that clarification is made as to who does what. Some of the immediate tasks which must be attended to include:

1) Notification of next of kin
2) Notification of consulate and/or sponsor
3) Meeting either or all of the above at the airport if they choose to come; arranging accommodations
4) Guarding the victim and/or murderer's family, neighbors, roommate(s) or fellow nationals from the media
5) Providing an official university response to the media
6) Protecting vulnerable or frightened friends or other potential victims (e.g., neighboring women friends of a woman murdered in a dorm; fellow nationals of a particular national group which feels threatened by the crisis)
7) Writing letters of sympathy and/or support to the family, friends, and fellow countrymen, where appropriate
8) Making arrangements with the mortician especially if specific cultural traditions must be followed (e.g., cremation)
9) Arranging a memorial service

10) Arranging repatriation or burial in the United States (Repatriation costs $4,000 - $5,000 at this time.)
11) Explaining judicial procedures to the involved foreign nationals
12) Visit family of victim if in community; take university chancellor (president) with you, if possible.

It may be that the foreign student adviser coordinates all of the above, but preferably you provide the cross-cultural sensitivity and participate in the total university response rather than assuming an undue burden upon yourself. Appropriate steps for you to undertake include all the letters to family (have highest officials sign them, but you are the best prepared person to write such letters); meeting family and/or other officials at airport; arranging the memorial service (perhaps with the help of national group members, adding cultural elements such as an elegy in the native language; national music, if available; incense, if traditional; appropriate symbols or representations of the deceased). Be available for advice to others involved in the necessary procedures. University and community religious organizations may be and should be used to discuss pertinent issues. One foreign student adviser issued a type of "pastoral letter" to all religious communities for clarification of issues involved in a campus foreign student murder.

Mistrust and anxiety run very high at such times. Questions of government involvement are volatile, and efforts should be made to clarify the truth and dispel rumors. Scrupulous reports of the murder should be kept on file henceforth; further investigations may demand accurate records years later. Photos and newspaper accounts should be filed and made available for family, embassy or consulate, and sponsor review.

The phone call home, as listed in immediate actions, is a crucial element in the aftermath of a murder. It is essential that a home phone number be on file for every student. If none is available, scrutiny of the student's past phone bills may yield the number. The telephone company may be of assistance.

The receiver of the phone call must be able to understand English, or it is necessary for the university to have a native speaker on hand for the call. When in doubt, have a native speaker there "in case."

Who should make the call is a decision which must be made by the university. It can be the foreign student adviser; in some cases it falls to the university chaplain; on some campuses it is the dean of students. If no phone call can be made for some reason (it must be an extremely valid reason), an urgent cable or express mail letter must be sent. No delay is tolerable in the notification process, however difficult it is to do. Occasionally, the consulate or sponsor will assume the responsibility. This is another situation where a personal relationship with at least one representative of each sponsoring agency from which you have students is helpful.

There are cases where there is no family, or the family does not accept the fact of the death, or has no means to bring the body home. If no insurance is available, the university must find the means to attend to the interring of the body. If cremation is acceptable, it is by far the less expensive alternative. In other cases, a county welfare burial may be obtained with a plot in the public-supported area of a local cemetery. Discuss these options with the embassy or consulate in a last effort to obtain financial support.

Yet another task remains in the wake of a murder, or any unexpected death of a foreign national: disposition of his/her earthly possessions, clearing out of the living quarters, closing of bank accounts, and shipment of goods to the family. It is, of course, preferable to have a family member or friends attend to these matters. If no one is available or willing, legal assistance will be needed for you to attend to them. It is a discomforting, unpleasant, thankless task, but one that must be attended to before the book can be closed on the situation.

The aftershock of a murder can last for a long time. Counseling and the student mental health/psychiatry services should be prepared for dealing with the anxiety, fear, and feelings of prejudice and discrimination that will surface. National group members may isolate themselves from the rest of the community as a self-defense mechanism and also to provide a buffer against ethnic slurs and resentment which may arise in the community.

There is also a "copy cat" effect which occurs after such violent incidents and suicides. Psychiatrists have labeled this the "Marilyn Monroe" effect, recalling the suicides which took place in imitation of Marilyn Monroe's death. Careful observation of those affected by the murder is called for at such times. Residence hall advisers, faculty, administrators, campus security, religious and social leaders, and, especially, the international student office should be extraordinarily sensitive to clues of aberrant or reactive behavior for several months after a violent crime has transpired. One campus faced such a repeat action after having just recovered from the tragedy of a murder of four foreign students by three other foreign students. Four months later a single foreign student from the victims' national group retaliated, killing two more students. The foreign student adviser had tremendous spin-off problems within his student population and the community for a long time to follow. It is an unfortunate reality with which we are confronted. You cannot be hesitant about involvement or give in to your own fear, anxieties, or emotion. The best advice is to be prepared and then rely upon your years of crisis management to pull you through.

**Appreciation for advice in the preparation of this chapter is expressed to H. Clay Ballard, director, Services for International Students and Scholars, at the University of California-Davis, and Ann Kuhlman, associate director, International Programs, at the University of Pennsylvania. The benefit of their unfortunate experiences with murder on their respective campuses form the basis for this chapter.

Chapter 8

Sex-Related Crises

The emergency situations which may arise in the life of the foreign student reflect, to some extent, the morality and social trends of the times. Rape, a universal, eternal crime against women (and sometimes against men) has become even more rampant in a society where pornography and violence are so widespread. "Date-rape" is, unfortunately, a reality on university campuses (and in the community). Unwanted pregnancies, among single and married women, are more common in an age and society where so many alternatives exist.

Homosexual encounters and affiliations are becoming more public and aggressive in the pursuit of acceptance. All of these sexually-related phenomena can present tremendous problems to the foreign national, especially one from a more sheltered or closed society. The foreign student adviser needs to be prepared to deal with these areas of potential crisis, and, what is even more important, to be able to alert the student in advance as to the potential of these situations in his/her campus environment.

Rape

The women's center of a college campus can be of great assistance to the foreign student adviser in preventive education and crisis-related management of rape. Attend rape awareness clinics in advance of a crisis so as to develop an understanding of the operating procedures on your campus or in your community. Some important questions to have answered in advance include:

1) Is a rape crisis counselor available 24 hours a day to accompany a victim to the police? If not, are there any other trained, experienced individuals upon whom a victim could rely? If all else fails, the foreign student adviser should go with the victim, if at all possible.
2) What is the attitude of the police in your community?
3) Is the media sensitive to the issues involved in rape? Identities of rape victims must never be revealed in the media, but other identifying characteristics should also be concealed (e.g., a "23-year-old female from Nepal" could be a strong identifying description without any names mentioned).
4) What are the counseling services available to a rape victim, and perhaps her family (especially her husband)? Specialized training is needed for such counseling. The women's center should be able to provide information. The community and/or campus health service should have information in that regard. The Planned Parenthood organization in your community might also be of assistance.

The condition, both physical and mental, of a rape victim, demands immediate, constant attention and care. As most people are aware, a victim should not wash or shower before a medical examination so as

to determine the reality of the sexual assault. Retelling of details is most traumatic and your moral support will be needed.

Understanding of the criminal proceedings involved is important and referral to your aforementioned network of legal services applies here.

The victim of a sexual assault, especially in a foreign culture, experiences tremendous anxiety afterwards, and often guilt. The victim generally is afraid to be alone. Your assistance in obtaining counseling and finding a suitable living arrangement is essential.

Tactful memos or phone calls to the victim's faculty may ease her (or his) return to the classroom. Without sensationalizing the details, a message containing the bare essentials might increase their sensitivity to the victim:

> "Miss _____ was recently subjected to a traumatic personal incident. She is now receiving professional help in her recovery. Your understanding and patience with her in your class (LIT 226) will be most appreciated."

Insurance coverage for related medical treatment is also a delicate issue. Your calm manner in dealing with all aspects of this situation will help here, too. Inform the student that insurance will cover the medical costs. Assist her or him in completing the forms. Insurance claim forms are a trial for foreign students under the best of circumstances. At such times the paperwork may prove unbearable. Your assistance will truly be appreciated.

Medical treatment should be continued beyond the initial examination. Women need to undergo a pregnancy test if their menstrual cycle does not follow its normal pattern. Male or female victims need to undergo lab work for a variety of venereal diseases. Although a cool, non-alarmist attitude must prevail, your guidance in these matters is necessary.

Cultural taboos and strictures which are associated with rape are strong and, for the most part, unyielding. Utmost privacy must be enforced, even among the office staff. A victim of rape or any sexual assault should be made aware of society's attitude toward rape in the United States, and this is where your prior education serves you well. Although censure and isolation may follow in other cultures, a victim here is encouraged to discuss the incident with trained counselors and to assign blame where it belongs--on the criminal. No fellow nationals should be called in during rape crises, unless absolutely necessary. The burden of shame in front of one's own people may be too much to bear. If translation services are needed, medical, religious or professional services should be thoroughly investigated before turning to a fellow national. The issue has so many cultural implications that the negative effect of the attitude of the unsensitized national may outweigh the positive effects of his translation skills.

Lastly, keep your lines of communication open with this person throughout her stay in your community. Long-term effects are not uncommon and you might be in a position to understand better any future problems that might arise from the rape incident. Don't let your own emotions carry you away. The victim needs a source of strength. Try to be that source.

Unwanted Pregnancy

The issue of unwanted pregnancy occurs in the tenure of most foreign student advisers. It is crucial for you to be able to deal with this in an objective, professional manner, unclouded by your personal value system. If your own values do not allow such objectivity, refer such counseling to another qualified individual immediately.

The foreign visitor who faces an unwanted pregnancy will turn to you for assistance after she has already decided that the pregnancy is undesirable. It is not your position to force a change in her decision. It is your position to help her find solutions to the problem. If, however, you detect a wavering in her decision, by all means offer alternative counseling services, such as religious or social organizations concerned with assisting pregnant women. Avoid those sensationalizing organizations which display posters of aborted fetuses in their waiting rooms. The student is already suffering from her condition and doesn't need extra trauma to intrude on her decision-making process. Planned Parenthood is a reputable, professional organization which can be relied upon to offer unbiased advice on alternatives. If the student is truly wavering, do not offer advice based on your own value system. Refer her elsewhere for this assistance.

A number of factors enter into the foreign student's mind when an unwanted pregnancy occurs: cessation or interruption of studies, financial burden, future care of the child, attitude of the sponsor, shame, guilt, and fear of returning home. In the case of the single woman, further concerns about public opinion of her pregnant condition and future "bastard" labeling of her child are a factor. Even in the case of married students, pregnancies occur which are undesirable to the parties involved. Insurance policies often require separate maternity riders, and if such a rider is not in force at the time of conception, no insurance will be available for the costs of prenatal care and/or the delivery ($2,000-$4,000). Sponsored students may be on a very limited scholarship which they will lose if time is taken out for pregnancy, delivery, and early infant care. All of these concerns need to be addressed by the pregnant student or the couple, and sometimes your advice is sought. Remain neutral, informative, and realistic. Suggestions for alternatives follow for your help in preparing to deal with this crisis in a cross-cultural setting.

When no decision has been reached as to maintaining or terminating the pregnancy:

1) Provide names, locations, phone numbers of other counseling services, such as Planned Parenthood.
2) Explain the Western (U.S. in particular) attitude toward single parenthood.
3) Provide information as to immigration ramifications, including future citizenship of the child (e.g., INS does allow a leave for medical reasons and pregnancy/delivery qualifies, with medical verification maintained in the student file).
4) Provide realistic information as to financial aid available (see Chapter 5), including future aid available to the baby.
5) Explore religious organization assistance which might be available (e.g., some religious organizations provide homes for pregnant women to live in with a family and return to after the birth with the child for a limited time).
6) Discuss sponsor/parental reactions.
7) Provide information as to adoption agencies.
8) Listen.

When a termination of pregnancy is desired:

1) Refer to proper medical authorities.
2) Offer moral and real support. For example, if the student is single and lives alone, or is keeping her condition secret from her roommate, the days after the abortion should be spent with a caring person, away from the isolation or activity of her own apartment.

An unwanted pregnancy is an extremely emotional issue. Many of us are ill-equipped to properly advise someone objectively and unemotionally. Listen to them. Provide information and alternatives, especially alternative sources of qualified, experienced, professional counseling. Establish well in advance your network of resources in this regard. It is truly a matter of life and death, the responsibility for which should not rest on your shoulders.

Gay/Lesbian Affiliations

Homosexual activities are becoming more visible and accepted in Western society, and some communities have experienced significant publicity on this subject. Campus communities have shared this social phenomenon, and foreign students are by no means exempt. Counseling is needed only when solicited.

There are two major areas in which the foreign student adviser may be brought into contact with homosexual activities in his community: desired contact by the foreign student, and undesired contact by the foreign student. A student generally seeks help in the latter case more often than the former. If your campus or community has an established gay/lesbian association, it is good to be aware of it. Know its reputation. Be aware of how to contact it. Student affairs/programs offices should have the names of an adviser and/or

officers. Have this information on hand in case it is needed. Health officials generally have a good idea of the homosexual activity within the community. Know how to contact them in times of need.

A foreign student may be referred to such an association in a casual way by a homosexual member who determines that this person is displaying homosexual inclinations. They may, in their mind, be trying to do the student "a favor," or be trying to solicit him or her as a future boyfriend or girlfriend. A student who seeks guidance or counseling for a sexually related problem may be referred to a homosexual association for further counseling. In such cases, the foreign student may turn to the foreign student adviser for advice before approaching the unknown group. Homosexual activity in other cultures has many different societal implications. Assessing the place such activities hold in Western society is hard for the foreign student. Straightforward, factual, unbiased information is needed. If you don't feel comfortable in such discussions, refer the student elsewhere. A women's center, a health care center, a student counseling center, a residence hall adviser all have training in such areas.

Occasionally the foreign student's attentions are solicited and these overtures may offend the student. Cultural practices of the foreign student may be misread by Western homosexuals (e.g., men kissing other men in public, or holding hands; women walking arm in arm). Physical attractiveness of the foreign student, combined with the cultural mystique he or she represents, may motivate a homosexual advance. Loneliness on the part of the foreign student may make him/her especially vulnerable to an overture of friendship, especially if he/she doesn't recognize the homosexual cues known to Western culture (and sometimes even those cues are not apparent). Reputable homosexual organizations discourage unsolicited "recruitment," and their assistance may be available to you in such cases. The foreign student may bring his case to you for help, complete with a record of phone calls received, cards, letters, etc. Your protective authority must be enforced here. Seek help from those authorities familiar with the homosexual community. Counsel the student to be firm and clear in his refusal to have contact with this individual or group. Support his efforts both physically and emotionally.

Occasionally a student is misguided in his/her perception of his/her own sexual inclinations. A female foreign student was once referred to the women's center for counseling when she explained her emotional problems to a professor as an excuse for failing an exam. He misread the cues, and with helpful but misguided advice, sent her to the women's center (another misperception, thinking that all women at the women's center were experienced in counseling lesbian women). Fortunately, the student counselor at the women's center had a good working relationship with the international student office and some knowledge of immigration regulations. The foreign student had confided in her that she had "earned" her scholarship to the United States by granting sexual favors to her sponsor over the years prior to coming. In order to maintain her scholarship, she would have to

return home during the summer and continue such activities which were abhorrent to her. As a consequence, she felt that she hated all men and was seeking a way to remain in the United States legally without "manifesting her womanhood" in such a manner. Close counseling through the international student office and the women's center clarified the issues and brought her a healthier attitude about her own sexuality.

Unsolicited sexual overtures of any kind can also be referred to legal sources, such as campus security, city police, and campus judicial boards. The resources are available. Establish the network beforehand and then you will be prepared to deal with the crisis when it arises.

Chapter 9

A Missing Person

The anxiety engendered about a missing foreign student can render one almost incapable of positive action. It must be remembered that these students are adults who have traveled thousands of miles on their own and have already faced countless tribulations without your help. Our assistance, especially to the concerned family members, is critical, but it is limited. Suggestions follow as to what you may do in the case of a missing person. Beyond these efforts, your only real responsibility is to be honest, available, and concerned. You cannot find the missing student. Don't feel guilty about what you cannot do. Your assistance in what you can do is all that is necessary.

1) Notify campus security.
2) Notify city and state police.
3) Notify the FBI.
4) Contact roommate, friends, family for any possible suggestions as to his/her whereabouts.
5) Work closely with investigators. Provide a photo if available in your files (all international student office files should contain a passport-type photo of each student).
6) Contact faculty to determine:
   a) last class attendance; class attendance history
   b) class standing; is there an academic problem?
7) Contact medical authorities and/or hospitals. Has (s)he been receiving any medical treatment? Any history of seizures, amnesia?
8) Call phone numbers on his/her last few phone bills. Any knowledge of his/her plans for travel?
9) Check travel agencies and airlines for any tickets issued under his/her name.
10) Check possible consulates for recent visa applications (especially Canada and/or Mexico).
11) Check your local international airport police for any reports which may pertain.
12) Also check bus lines or railroad terminal police for any such reports.
13) If near a large city (e.g., New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago) file a missing person report directly with their bureau (although your local police report should reach it as well).
14) Check religious authorities to ascertain if any cults are in operation in your vicinity. Ascertain if this student may have had a vulnerability to such proselytizing.
15) Be in close contact with the family. Are there friends or relatives in another country whom student may be visiting?
16) Request bank records of all financial activity on student's account since date of last known presence on campus. Where are checks being cashed? Where is bank card being used? Does student's signature match his original signature? What types of stores are being frequented?

17) Ascertain from friends if drugs or alcohol may be a factor.
18) Is a member of the opposite sex involved? Has the student gone off to marry, or live with someone, removed from social censure? Perhaps friends or relatives of the other involved party can be of some assistance.
19) Check homeless shelters in your city, nearby cities, and the closest large city. The Salvation Army, Rescue Mission, and Catholic Charities are three organizations which may offer such shelter to the homeless.
20) Keep exact records of all contacts made concerning the student: names, dates, phone numbers, locations, etc. The parents and police will want that information.

The natural tendency is to fear the worst. Images of death, prostitution, cults, amnesia, prison, and worse all enter our minds. One assurance by a foreign student adviser of 26 years' experience is that "they always turn up!" In all 26 years she has never truly "lost" a foreign student, although there were many worried days and sleepless nights while several were "misplaced." Try all of the mentioned routes, plus any others which come to mind. However, if you have established yourself as willing to listen and available as a source of relief to the student, you may rest assured that you have done all you could. The majority of missing people turn up eventually, none the worse for the wear on the parents, friends, and foreign student adviser who were so worried about them!

Chapter 10

Terrorist Activities

The crisis nature of terrorist activity requires advance consideration by all involved in foreign student affairs. Emergency protocols should be in place for such situations similar to those arranged for cases of murder, rape, and other crises. Terrorism, by its nature, is sudden, violent, and inflicts damage upon the victim of the activity. As foreign student advisers, we must be prepared to anticipate and foil terrorist activity in advance, and to act immediately to render dysfunctional any students involved in such activity as soon as they are identified.

Efforts to eliminate potential terrorist activity before it begins require a very sensitive, current, involved administration that is tuned in to world events and can understand and identify pressure points and boiling points. Campus and community security forces should be alert in protecting possible sites of activity, such as meetings of opposing national groups during a period of political strife between their home countries. An arranged speaker, debate, or educational forum by one national group that is subject to antagonism by another group can be a target area for terrorist activity. Sporting, social, and cultural events are potential sites for violent, senseless acts. At times of political strife in home countries, it is well to remember that the campus is but a microcosm of the real world. These foreign nationals are not immune from the passionate sentiments stirring among their fellow countrymen at home. These passions, combined with the stress, guilt, and frustration of being thousands of miles away, can lead to desperate acts in some unstable people.

A person who would commit a terrorist act needs immediate psychological treatment. The legal implications need to be dealt with. It is, again, at such times where your network of medical and legal resources comes into play. Legal counsel is generally needed for both sides involved. A court-ordered restraining notice may be needed by the victim to protect him (them) from further harassment or, worse yet, continued terrorist activity. The perpetrator should be advised of the legal implications and even criminal nature of his activities. Immigration ramifications must be explained as well.

The foreign student adviser must be ready to work at a moment's notice to protect involved parties from real danger. One foreign student adviser whisked three Christian Lebanese students off campus to an undisclosed location for three days and nights to allow tempers to cool and security forces to handle the antagonists in a Lebanese/Palestinian confrontation that had been in process on the patio of a dormitory. Escalating threats, increasing numbers of students involved, and several nail-studded gloves on the hands of the antagonists resulted in a frantic dorm director's call to the foreign student adviser. Immediate response of both the foreign student adviser and campus security averted potential physical harm and more

serious commitments to violence on the part of the warring factions. Who was to pay the bill for the off-campus hotel was matter of dispute within the student affairs office for several months, but the safety of the students had been secured.

Dealing with the aftermath of terrorist activity that occurs elsewhere can often fall upon the international office. Over the past few years of plane hijackings and hostage taking, foreign student advisers have had to deal with crises unknown years ago. A campus was just recently moved to emotional outcry when a graduate student returning from a sociological conference in Pakistan was among the few murdered hostages on the airplane that was to bring him back to defend his doctoral dissertation. His wife, two infant children, colleagues, and friends were affected by the senseless waste of life in such a meaningless fashion. The foreign student adviser, campus counseling staff, religious counselors, academic advisers, faculty, and friends all had to rally together to support these distraught victims of terrorism. The victims are not only those directly involved, but a whole coterie of family members, friends, and fellow nationals. In cases of violent activity against one national group, all members of that group feel threatened. During the Iranian crisis, many foreign students experienced U.S. societal censure if they merely looked Iranian! Arabs (and no Arab ever wants to be mistaken for an Iranian), Pakistanis, Turks, and Greeks were avoiding community gatherings of all sorts (bars, restaurants, stores, etc.) in order to avoid the slurs hurled at "the Iranians who were holding U.S. citizens hostage." Violent acts approaching terrorist activity were initiated by U.S. nationals against foreign students at that time: beer bottles were thrown at students walking down streets; car windows were smashed; anonymous threatening phone calls were received; slurs were written or painted on elevators in buildings where foreign students lived. The foreign student adviser, sadly, had also to deal with this side of the coin, and elicit campus and community protection for these innocent victims of violent actions. Community awareness and sensitivity have to be raised at such times. Churches, social organizations, public forums, and the public relations office's work with media can all be utilized to promote better understanding and raise the level of public sensitivity to the real issues involved. The realistic side of the story also requires that the foreign student adviser warn the foreign students about potential danger spots and caution them to avoid such locations.

The nature of terrorist activity is such that its occurrence is rare and isolated. Establish your protocols. Keep current on the world situation. Know your foreign population and your community nature. You have then done all you can to prepare for a crisis of a terrorist nature. Let us hope that the preparation will be in vain.

Chapter 11

Case Studies

Case Study #1: Emotional/Nervous Breakdown: Arab National

Scenario: A woman, age 27, from Egypt is enrolled for her first semester in a graduate program. The previous summer she had been enrolled in an intensive English-language program in the United States. Her adjustment at your institution has been very difficult, and she is now in your office in a very agitated state. As she relates her story to you she cries uncontrollably and continues talking nonstop for long periods of time. It is already after 5 p.m. on a Friday afternoon.

Some factors that are immediately known to you:

1. She is a sponsored student (Egyptian Government).
2. She is tremendously homesick, but the fellow Egyptian students and professors on campus continue to reassure her that it will pass.
3. She doesn't want to be studying at this point in her life, but the opportunity for this scholarship was too good to turn down.
4. She has had her menstrual period for long stretches (six-eight days) about every two-three weeks since her arrival in the United States. She was receiving medical treatment for this at her previous school, but it was ineffective and therefore she has not continued medical treatment.
5. It is winter and the weather has been quite severe for the last few weeks.

Suggestions:

1. Remain with her as long as possible at the time. Arrange for someone to be with her over the weekend.
2. Encourage psychiatric counseling. Use the medical symptoms she is having as motivation/justification for her visit to the health center. Alert health center personnel.
3. Discuss the situation with faculty/fellow nationals who are encouraging her stay in United States. This advice should be discontinued.

Solution: After assessing the situation through counseling and medical treatment, the foreign student adviser and psychiatrist determined that the student's health, both mental and physical, would stand a better chance of returning to a normal state <u>in her home environment</u>. A medical leave of absence was obtained, as well as an agreement from her sponsor to resume her scholarship upon her return. The most difficult aspect of the scenario was to convince her to return home. Images of failure, shame, and parental disappointment loomed ominously. The foreign student adviser equated psychiatric/emotional disturbances to medical problems, such as her menstrual pattern, and clarified a tangible need to rest and recuperate. Winter weather, although

a real negative factor in her personal adjustment, also became a motivating factor in her decision to return home.

Case Study #2: Death: Chinese National

Scenario: A Taiwanese student was fishing with his wife and two friends in another state during a school vacation. A lost fishing pole caused him to enter the water and he was swept to his death by an undercurrent. Neither his wife nor his friends knew how to swim and were unable to save him.

1. Unsuccessful attempts at resuscitation at the hospital created a bill of $1,600. Insurance rejected the claim.
2. Wife spoke no English, was very young, and had no knowledge of his fiscal, immigration, insurance, or other legal affairs. Car was registered in his name only.
3. Body had to be brought back to student's campus and then shipped home.

Suggestions:

1. Rely upon friends to support wife in her grief and instability.
2. Arrange transportation of body to campus through university, consular, or sponsor resources. Discuss repatriation costs with insurance company, or with parents.
3. Assist in arrangements for memorial service, in accordance with Chinese culture. Attend.
4. Advocate on behalf of student's estate against payment of hospital costs. If they stand, advocate on behalf of student's estate with insurance company.
5. Counsel wife (through fellow national translator) as to her options.

Solution: The wife had no alternative but to return home. The insurance company finally paid hospital costs after intervention of university legal counsel. The estate of the deceased student was able to cover the costs of his wife's return home and his repatriation. Bank officials expedited release of his accounts to wife upon intervention of university legal counsel.

Case Study #3: Mental Instability/Divorce: Indian National

Scenario: An articulate, refined, seemingly mature Indian couple came to the university together, each intending to pursue graduate work in their respective professional fields. Over the course of the first semester, the husband began experiencing major personality disorders and behavioral peculiarities. The wife attempted to cope with both aspects of his apparent mental dysfunction, but found it beyond her strength and ability. She sought counseling from a variety of sources, which helped her to maintain her own stability. His symptoms, which included insomnia and resultant all-night walking around campus, extreme irritability, and violent emotional outbursts, led to his withdrawal from all academic pursuits. A loss of his graduate assistantship was the natural consequence. This resulted in a financial crisis for him. He sought no medical help and would

accept no medical or psychological counseling from any source. The only contact the foreign student adviser had with him was financial. He came into the office for loans periodically, which did provide some opportunity for counseling.

The crisis peaked when he was arrested for refusing to pay for a pizza and causing a major disturbance at a restaurant in his argument with the manager. His phone call from the city jail prompted the foreign student adviser to find a bail bondsman to release him. This gave the adviser an opportunity to establish custodial supervision, which ultimately resulted in commitment to a psychiatric center.

Suggestions:
1. What is the role of the wife in the situation? Can it be a remedial element or is it part of the problem?
2. How significant was the termination of academic pursuits and consequent loss of assistantship to his mental condition?
3. How serious is his financial situation? Can the wife or parents provide support?
4. What were the background elements that brought on the instability? The apparent drastic change in such a short time period from his arrival in September to the onset of symptoms of psychosis took place in less than one month.
5. How will the wife cope under the stress of such a situation? Counseling must be continued for her own emotional and mental health.

Solution: While an inpatient at a psychiatric center, student entered into a liaison with an American woman, also suffering mental instability. They checked themselves out of the center and began living together on her public assistance support. An immediate pregnancy ensued. The student demanded a divorce, consequently, from his wife. She granted the divorce to avoid further emotional distress and to provide the freedom to disassociate herself from the trauma that was disrupting her studies and entire life. She finally wrote to their parents informing them of the events of the fall semester.

The scenario continues at length, but suffice it to say that many features of crisis management and cross-cultural awareness were involved. Letters written by the parents to the foreign student adviser required major cultural sensitivity in their response. A subsequent visit of the father to see his son and grandson required the foreign student adviser to provide a detailed account of the entire scenario, replete with dates of occurrences, medical, academic, and police reports, personal assessments, and advice.

The future of the wife was of concern as well, due to the cultural stigma attached to both mental illness and divorce. Significant guilt, anxiety, and, to a large measure, resentment were built up inside her, and these destructive elements could

destroy her heretofore mentioned "articulate, refined, and mature" nature.

Case Study #4: Psychosomatic Illness/Stress: East African National
Scenario: A 22-year-old student from East Africa was a conscientious individual in his home country, working successfully for the government in the Forestry Ministry. He had taken on the burden of paternal responsibilities in the family when 14 years old after his father was killed in a car accident. He had his own family as well--a wife and infant son. When the opportunity to pursue graduate study in the United States presented itself, his mother, siblings, and wife were understandably mixed in their reaction, but in the interest of his future, they supported him. He came to an English-language center to prepare for the necessary TOEFL score for admission into the Ph.D. program.

After four months in the United States, he suffered gradually worsening stomach pains sufficient to bring him to the attention of a faculty member who referred him to the student health service for evaluation. When he was first seen, it was clear that his symptoms of pain were worse when he was in class. Over the past two months he had lost 10 pounds because of poor appetite. His sleeping pattern was disrupted and he had gradually lost interest in school. He was performing poorly in class. An upper GI series of X-rays revealed gastritis, an irritation of the lining of the stomach. He had suffered a similar problem once before that he had related to pressures encountered when he was promoted to a level of greater responsibility with his government.

He was referred for psychological evaluation by one of the staff general physicians. In the interview he was restless, gave only brief responses, and demonstrated a passive, withdrawn demeanor. He was pleasant and cooperative. The language barrier was moderate to severe.

It was significant that since he came to the university he had been quite isolated. His one close friend, a compatriot from his native land, had completed his Ph.D. dissertation and returned home one month before he was seen at the health center. Thoughts of family, wife, and child were constantly with him to the extent that he had telephoned home six times in the two weeks prior to his appointment. Second thoughts about coming to the United States crowded his mind. He felt lonely and sad. He was quite discouraged when he failed the TOEFL examination by 20 points two weeks before. This failing performance, the apparent "final straw," precluded his hope for timely admission to the university to begin his studies.

Suggestions:
1. Are the physical symptoms real, or are they a result of psychological problems being converted into somatic or body symptoms?

2. What role are the loneliness and absence of supportive relationships playing?
3. How significant is the role of his own self-perception? At home he had been the parental authority for eight years and, more recently, a parent himself. He had occupied a significant professional position in his country. The less prestigious role of a student in an English-language center presents a stark contrast. Is that a factor?
4. Is there guilt involved in his self-esteem: guilt over abandoning his family, guilt about his inadequacy in English, which is delaying the start of his academic program, hence extending his stay in the United States?

Solution: The student was treated at the health center for his physical symptoms, thus avoiding the stigma that might have prevented him from seeking help for his obvious psychological needs. Psychological issues were dealt with in physical terms in order to reach a closer fit between the counselor's and the student's understanding. In addition to Maalox and diet guidance, which quieted the hyperactivity of his intestinal tract, several direct interactions to restore balance in his personal life were discussed. A temporary lightening of his academic pressure was supported, and he was actively assisted in reducing his course load after consultation with the faculty. Enhancing his personal support was an important aspect of counseling and he was encouraged to bring acquaintances with him to the sessions. Visits were scheduled frequently, two to three times per week, but contacts lasted only 10-15 minutes. These brief, frequent contacts helped meet his need for an increased level of activity in his life. Several efforts to replace losses and to reduce current stresses were strategies to reestablish balance and restore a sense of well-being for the student.

A helpful approach to his situation was an assessment of his supports and losses that surrounded the time of his first identified difficulties. This analysis is a useful first step in beginning to address the issue of balance. The technique of networking is valuable here. It proved helpful to work with significant other persons around the student, inviting them to participate actively in the helping process. Collaboration took place with the ESL staff, faculty, the foreign student adviser's office, friends, roommates, and others. This kind of networking works well in counseling international students and is distinguished from the accustomed approaches of individual and group therapy with American students.

This case study is adapted, with the permission of the author from the article, "Mental health and international students," by Murray M. De Armond, M.D., which appeared in the April/May 1983 issue of the **NAFSA Newsletter**. The article, in its entirety, is recommended for further reading.

Chapter 12

Directory of Resources

Utilize this format in a notebook or file system for handy reference for crisis management. Arrange headings in a tabulated list format so that you can fill in names, phone numbers, and so forth.

Academic Contacts

Contact/Phone No./Address/Hrs. of Operation/Notes

Academic Department Contacts
(Have one primary contact in each department)
(Have your campus directory immediately available at all times - both at home and in the office)
English Language Institute
Fundamental/Basic Skills Development
Graduate Dean
Honors Program
Remedial Skills
Undergraduate Dean
University Academic Counseling Center
(Are services free?)
(Is tutoring available?)
(Has the counseling staff been trained in cross-cultural counseling techniques? Are they aware of cultural differences they might encounter?)

Family Affairs

Contact/Phone No./Address/Hrs. of Operation/Notes

AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)
Al-Anon (for family members of alcoholics)
Alcoholism Treatment Center
Battered/Abused Persons Shelter
(Do they allow children?)
(Is there a time limit on stay?)
(Is location kept secret from spouse?)
(Is counseling available there?)
Board of Education: Pupil Services Division
Community Mental Health Care
(Is there a sliding fee scale?)
(Are nonresidents eligible?)

Counselors:
- University Family Counselors
- Pastoral Family/Individual Counselors
- Debt Counselors

Day Care Centers
- (Hours of operation)
- (Ages of children)
- (Fee structure)

Elementary School

Free Food: Distribution Centers
- (Eligibility)
- (Where? When?)

LaLeche League
- (Contact person; if unknown, call community volunteer center. They usually have information. This group very helpful for pregnant women and new mothers)

Obstetricians

Pediatricians/Pediatric Care
- (Local hospital or health clinic, especially free "Well-Child Clinic")

Planned Parenthood

WICS (Supplemental Food Program for women, infants, children)

Contacts in Case of Death

Contact/Phone No./Address/Hrs. of Operation/Notes

Airlines (for repatriation)

Chaplain(s):
- University
- Community

Coroner(s)

County Morgue

Funeral Home(s)

Hospital

Health Emergencies

Contact/Phone No./Address/Hrs. of Operation/Notes

Ambulance Service
- (Cost)

Community Health Center
- Pregnancy Testing
- Prenatal Care

Health Center (University)
- (Do they have an ambulance?)

Hospital Emergency Room

Hospital Social Worker
    (For discussion of case, including finances)
Insurance Company
Physician(s) for your network:
    (Are they willing to provide information to you free of charge? 24 hour or 8 hours per day? 5 days or 7 days per week? Will they treat your students in case of emergency?)
    General Practitioner
    Obstetrician
    Gynecologist
    Dermatologist
    Pediatrician
    Optometrist
    Dentist/Dental Surgeon
    Psychiatrist

Legal Emergencies

Contact/Phone No./Address/Hrs. of Operation/Notes

Bail Bondsman
Campus Security
City Jail
City Police
County Jail
District Attorney
FBI
Lawyers:
    Immigration (know several)
    Criminal
    Civil
    Community/Public Legal Services
        (What are eligibility standards?)
        (Are they limited in their involvement?)
State Police
Student Legal Services
    (Do they charge?)
    (Do they defend in civil proceedings?)
    (Do they defend in criminal proceedings?)
    (Do they have any knowledge of immigration law?)
    (Are they restrained against involvement in a student vs. student case?)
University Legal Counsel

Contacts in Case of Murder

Contact/Phone No./Address/Hrs. of Operation/Notes

Airlines (for repatriation)

Chaplain(s):
    University
    Community
Coroner(s)
County Morgue
Funeral Home(s)
Hospital
Lawyer (see Legal Section)
Police Investigators
Psychiatrist (see Medical Section)
Public Relations Office (University)

Contacts in Case of Sex-Related Crises

Contact/Phone No./Address/Hrs. of Operation/Notes

Abortion Counseling/Service
Adoption Services
Campus Security
Emergency Room
Gay (Student) Association
Gynecologist
Health Center (campus)
    (for medical treatment)
    (for psychological counseling)
Lesbian (Student) Association
Obstetrician
Planned Parenthood
Police Department
Pregnancy Assistance Programs
    (Campus? Community?)
    (Cost?)
    (Do they provide counseling?)
    (Do they provide financial assistance?)
    (Can homes be made available for the pregnant woman to live in?)
Psychiatrist
Rape Crisis Center
Women's Center

Related Resource Readings

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Index

Abuse 15
Academic crisis 14
Accidents 10
AIDS 12
Attitude 3
Civil proceedings 23
Criminal proceedings 24
Death
  of a student 11
  of a spouse 16
  of a child 16
  of a parent 18,28
  of a family member 18
Divorce
  student 14
  parents 19
Ethnic associations 31
Financial crisis relief 30
Gay affiliations 40
Health problems 6
Illness
  of a student 6
  of a family member 18
Immigration problems 22
Instability 7
Insurance 6
Intervention 3
Legal Aid Society 30
Lesbian affiliations 40
"Marilyn Monroe" effect 36
Mental health 6
Missing person 43
Murder 34
Physically debilitating illness 8
Political strife at home 19
Pregnancy 10,27,28,39
Professional associations 31
Protocols for crisis 34
Public health 6,30
Rape 37
Religious organizations 3,27,31
Service organizations 31
Social Services Department (community) 30
Suicide 32
Terrorism 45
WICS 30,53

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